



Overview

Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008

EPA Region 6 Tribal Workshop

October 7, 2008

Helping People Help the Land



2008 Farm Bill: Food, Conservation and Energy Act

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) became law on May 22, 2008

The legislation includes broad provisions for conservation, energy and tax policy

Enactment of the bill followed a multiple year process of deliberation and debate yielding a final product with some but not all of the policy recommendations offered by the United States Department of Agriculture



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to agriculture and forestry producers to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals

INCREASES SUPPORT OF WORKING LAND CONSERVATION

Increases funding above the current law by \$3.4 billion in budget authority over the next ten years

Reauthorized until 2012

3



EQIP Key Points

Validates NRCS forestry activities; specifically references forest management

Expanded to include energy conservation benefits associated with conservation practices

Places a priority on reduction of water use or no new lands irrigated

Air quality practices \$37.5 million per year (2009-2012)

Specific section on assistance with conservation practices utilized for organic production and transition

- Payments for practices with organic production benefits limited to not more than \$20,000 per year; \$80,000 in 6 years

4



EQIP Key Points (2)

For limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers or ranchers:

- Up to 90 percent cost share or at least 25 percent above the otherwise applicable rate
- Advance payments to cover up to 30% of the cost of materials to install conservation improvements

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Payment Limitations

- \$300,000 per person over a six-year period
- Up to \$450,000 per person over a six-year period may be authorized for projects of environmental significance

5



EQIP Funding

Fiscal Year	Dollar Amount
2008	\$1,200,000,000
2009	\$1,337,000,000
2010	\$1,450,000,000
2011	\$1,588,000,000
2012	\$1,750,000,000

6



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Assists landowners to develop and improve wildlife habitat
on private or Tribal land

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

- ✓ Will continue to assist in conservation of habitat on agricultural, forest and tribal land
- ✓ Provides cost-share assistance to participants seeking to improve and protect wildlife habitat

7



WHIP Funding

Fiscal Year	Dollar Amount
2008	\$85,000,000
2009	\$85,000,000
2010	\$85,000,000
2011	\$85,000,000
2012	\$85,000,000

8



Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

Provides matching funds to help State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses

- Protects farm and ranch land from conversion to non-agricultural uses.
- Reauthorizes FRPP through 2012 (no statutory payment limitation)
- Creates new conservation opportunities through increased funding
- Changes program purposes from topsoil protection to protecting agricultural use and related conservation values by limiting nonagricultural uses

9



FRPP Funding

Fiscal Year	Dollar Amount
2008	\$97,000,000
2009	\$121,000,000
2010	\$150,000,000
2011	\$175,000,000
2012	\$200,000,000

10



Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Assists landowners to restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrub land and certain other lands and provides assistance for restoration.

GRP Conservation Opportunities

- ✓ 1.22 million acres of grazing land to be enrolled and protected from conversion to other uses
- ✓ Reauthorizes GRP through 2012
- ✓ Establishes an annual \$50,000 payment limitation per person for rental agreements and an annual \$50,000 payment limitation per person for restoration agreement payments
- ✓ No statutory limit for easements

11



Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

A voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that helps private landowners, farmers and ranchers protect and restore wetlands on their property

PROTECTS FRAGILE WETLANDS

- ✓ Allows up to 3,041,200 acres of wetlands to be enrolled
- ✓ Reauthorized through 2012
- Payment Limitations
 - Restoration Agreements \$50,000 per person annually
 - Easements No statutory limitation

12



WRP Key Points

Removed annual acreage cap

Limits enrollment to private or Tribal lands

Enrollment Options:

- ✓ Permanent easements
- ✓ 30-year easements
- ✓ 30-year contract option for Tribes
- ✓ Restoration cost-share agreements

Prohibits enrollment of land in easements where ownership has changed during the previous 7 years for the purposes of enrolling in the WRP

Specifies cost-assistance for maintenance activities

Changes easement compensation implemented on the date of enactment

13



Conservation Programs

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP pays farmers who are improving conservation treatment on their working lands to encourage the continuation of farming and ranching practices that benefit soil, water, and air resources

The renamed **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** will focus on:

- ✓ Incentivizing new conservation
- ✓ Rewarding producers for high levels of additional stewardship
- ✓ Addressing local priority resource concerns

14



CSP Funding

Fiscal Year	ACRES
2008	0
2009	12,769,000
2010	12,769,000
2011	12,769,000
2012	12,769,000

15



Conservation Access

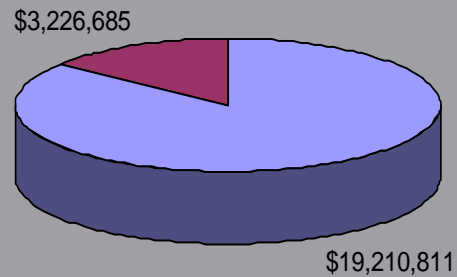
Assistance to Certain Farmers and Ranchers to Improve Their Access to Conservation Programs:

- ✓ Ten percent funding set aside for Beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers
 - ✓ 5% funding set aside for each group in EQIP
 - ✓ A 5% acreage set-aside for each group in CSP
- ✓ Funds or acreage not obligated during a fiscal year would be returned to the general EQIP and CSP programs

16



**EQIP 2008 LIMITED RESOURCE, BEGINNING FARMER,
TRIBAL, & UNDERSERVED CONTRACTS (14.4%)**



Administrative Requirements

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

For conservation programs, persons or legal entities are eligible if—

The average non-farm AGI is less than \$1,000,000, or

2/3 of the average total AGI is from farming, ranching, or forestry

The limitation may be waived on a case-by-case basis if:

Environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected

Not in effect until FY2009



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

For More Information, visit:

- ✓ Your local USDA Service Center
- ✓ Your local conservation district
- ✓ <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>